

[Intimations of Melancholia in Literature](#)

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Call for Papers

Date:

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Location:

Pennsylvania, United States

Subject Fields:

Cultural History / Studies, Humanities, Literature, Psychology, Health and Health Care

Annual Northeast Modern Language Association

52nd Annual Convention

Philadelphia, PA March 11-14, 2021

Marriott Downtown Philadelphia

Submit proposals to: <https://cfplist.com/nemla/Home/S/18552>

The focus of this panel is to assess and illustrate the potential or possibility regarding the influence of mental disorders on various notable writers. Whether related to bipolar disorder, post-partum depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD], or some other form of clinical depression, melancholia has appeared throughout literature. For example, how is bipolarism reflected in some of Anne Sexton's award winning poetry? What effects of Sylvia Plath's clinical depression are evident in her writing? How does the father's suicide of eight-year-old Ernest Hemingway possibly influence the dangerous, life-threatening choices Ernest made in his adult life? When Ambrose Bierce suffered from Traumatic Brain Injury [TBI] during his service in the Civil War, what influence did his traumatic experience have on his writing?

Other notable writers such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, aware of women suffering with what was later diagnosed as post-partum depression, depicted a character in “Yellow Wallpaper” who illustrates bouts with that specific disease. How did Gilman learn about the disease? What real-life examples was she using to help her describe her protagonist? What enlightenment about experiencing depression was revealed by other writers either suffering from or writing about melancholia and/or depression. How does a writer’s subject matter and tone reflect their mental state? What effect does their possible condition have or negate in their characterization or subject matter?

Please keep in mind that in consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Director and the NeMLA Board are considering options for remote online sessions and/or hybrid sessions [possibly both in the Marriott and through some form of remote online participation].

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